



The Alberta Fish & Game Association

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March 21, 2012

The Right Hon. Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Building
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Re: Potential amendments to the Fisheries Act

Dear Prime Minister Harper,

The Alberta Fish and Game Association is a not-for-profit volunteer organization that has been active in fish and wildlife management and habitat conservation since 1908 with a current province-wide membership of well over 21,000 individuals keen on maintaining Alberta's natural heritage.

After having reviewed the proposed new subsection 35(1) of the Fisheries Act we are gravely concerned with its lack of mention of fish habitat. Giving no consideration to the habitat surrounding a fishery will most certainly result in a deterioration of water quality which ultimately will jeopardize many important fisheries and, potentially, water sheds. Siltation of spawning beds and contamination of fish rearing areas are two of the most common impacts of industrial activities which in turn are linked directly to the decline of fish and other aquatic species. If anything, laws should be strengthened to protect our dwindling fisheries.

We understand your desire to speed up the approval process for large economic development projects, however it must be done in a careful and non-threatening manner to habitat. As such the AFGA is not opposed to development but again, to do so at risk to habitat and all the creatures that depend on it is not an option.

Further to our review of the proposed wording, it is mentioned that any protection of fish habitat will only apply to "fisheries of economic, cultural and ecological value". Who will take on the role of God and decide which fish are of value? We suggest that all fish species are of value in the big picture as every species plays a role in the survival of the next one up the chain.

Prime Minister Harper, our request is a simple one, namely that you do not proceed with this change to the Fisheries Act without first receiving all stakeholders input.

Yours in Conservation,

Conrad Fennema, President
The Alberta Fish and Game Association

cc. Honourable Keith Ashfield, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Honourable Alison Redford, Premier of Alberta
Honourable Frank Oberle, Minister, Alberta Sustainable Development
Alberta Fish and Game Association Executive
Canadian Wildlife Federation Affiliates
AFGA Membership